

Seriously?

by Electromotive Force

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Summary: [NOW ACCEPTING REQUESTS] - A sporadic offering of random, humorous critiques of the canon. Read at your own risk, and let not your appreciation of the game be tainted by these parodies to come! You have been fore-warned...

1. Intro

****Seriously?****

No, seriously, this is the introduction and it is serious. Yes, seriously.

This will be a series of short, humorous drabbles dealing with the quirks of the HALO canon. Don't take it seriously.

I never thought I'd do one of these. I'm more of a serious writer, or at least I always have been until now. Each of these laugh fics will be very short, but hopefully very funny chapters within a framework of the size I haven't yet determined. I will be making this up as I go along, replaying the games, visiting old cutscenes, nitpicking, criticizing, and just plain poking fun at certain parts of the storyline I find rather amusing. No game or novel or whatever will be immune. It's all fair game to me.

Don't get me wrong: I love HALO.

But the simple fact is that just like anything else, HALO has its cheesy and/or unintelligible moments and they are ripe for the picking. You'd think with the amount of hard science aspects employed in this sci-fi themed storyline, it would be pretty believable. For the most part, it is. Oh, and very enjoyable and entertaining, let's not forget. Its foundations and storyline is very well defended by sci-fi norms and industry standards, but it is not completely defensible. Heehee.

This is where these ficlets come in: to exploit it all and make it laughable in the meantime.

As of now, I envision these brief pieces to be a mix of different points of view. I cannot be sure of how often and when updates will come, but when they do I promise I will have done my best to make you laugh. Or at the very least put a smile on your face.

So, sit back, read, laugh, point and snicker, and enjoy.

-EmF

/WARNING FOR VULGAR LANGUAGE/

2. One

****Commander Keyes?**
>Bitch, please.

This chapter deals with a conversation I had with Katsuhiko (an awesome writer here on this site) while in an XBL party chat session. I wasn't fully vested into the conversation and not listening very much, as I had just finished a hard day's work and all I wanted was to play some Griffball. Then after a few minutes I heard him and some other blokes talking about a particular cutscene in HALO 3. Replaying their critique of the scene in my head, I instantly remembered which one they were discussing. It's titled Sierra 117, where John arrives at the makeshift HQ for ground forces in the area, led by CPT Keyes sole surviving daughter, Commander Miranda Keyes. You should watch that cutscene right now before you read any further.

Well, I started to listen for some reason and I couldn't help but agree with what they were saying. This was well over a year ago and it stuck with me. Just a few hours ago on this 15th day of March in the year 2014, it gave me the inspiration, noâ€_the_ _launching point_â€to rip every HALO cutscene apart and expose some of them for what they are: hastily-conceived bridges from one action sequence to the next. You'd assume that considerable amounts of Bungie's time and budget was utilized to craft these colorful cinematics. While usually graphically-pleasing for their time, some of these gap-spanners strike me as odd and in some cases failures of story-telling. Some of it is just nitpicking, but that's not the point.

The point is that all these off-color moments allow someone the opportunity to make people laugh from them, so that's what I'ma-gonna-do. Here is another take on that very cutscene, taken from my humorous POV. You may or may not have already surmised for yourself that the original deserved some scrutiny.

* * *

><p>Dimly-lit as the command bunker's ambience appeared, everyone inside was staying wide awake and intent on absorbing the details in the Commander's upcoming brief. Reports had been flowing in around the hour from every long-local communications circuit that had still been available to the support staff. They worked tirelessly through the night and it showed. Stimulants, even the military-grade ones,

were starting to lose their effectiveness. They were nervous as they vested all concentration and skill to make sure the remotely-located sensor nodes remained active for the users at the distant ends scattered all over East Africa. Those brave soldiers in the field were some of the only eyes and ears remaining out there as they faithfully gathered and propagated their intel through the grid.<p>

For the Commander's support staff here at this scaled-down nerve center, compiling the information wasn't easy, for it all came in fragments. The people on the other end of these transmission paths could not send data continuously, lest they preferred a nasty surprise. Covenant direction-finding had gotten better over the years as more and more UNSC technology fell into enemy hands and was reverse-engineered and subsequently exploited. Frequency-hopping and routine crypto re-keys were the standard operating procedures among technicians, but they only added more layers to aged security technologies. The only real safeguard against detection for remote users was to hop physical locations at unpredictable intervals.

But it felt safe and secure for much of the troops marooned here in this old, makeshift bunker. Skilled and highly-experienced individuals had taken charge of this location, much to the boon of the leadership. They were currently gathered in the main command post presenting the latest intel to the Commander, who was no doubt formulating a new set of directives for any unit out there they could still gain contact with. They had a lot of tools at their disposal, evidenced by the wealth of communications consoles and displays lining most of the CP's periphery which highlighted friendly positions and assets throughout this theatre of operations. With enough time and resources, a regional defense posture could be re-formed in the wake of this massive, overwhelming Covenant campaign that had decimated so many units. There was a definite chain of command here, with a Naval Commander leading the effort. She currently found herself in the middle of the command post's cavernous ops floor.

She didn't seem talkative or actively engaged in the way of planning, likely favoring one of those passive leadership styles which preferred the view and context of those around rather than aggressively collaborating and leading from the front.

Interestingly enough, given the current dire situation of Earth and the UNSC at-large, the female Commander was more concerned with hair getting in her face rather than returning a proper salute. With none present to outrank her, she felt compelled to let her hair down, which at its current length was surely out of regs. She also seemed to have a knack for pointing out the obvious when escorting the newly-arrived visitors further inward, which only provided dramatic effect, as if she should remain the center of attention longer than necessary.

Sluts displayed these sorts of behaviors.

Of course everyone in the CP knew by now that if even a single HALO fired, depending on its location in the galaxy, it was bad news. And should this encroaching Prophet reach the Ark that all these intel analysts in the bunker already knew of, _of course _the entire array firing simultaneously would mean the extinction of all sentient beings in the galaxy. Did the Master Chief really have time for all

this superfluous explanation?

Time was running short for the UNSC. The isolated and fragmented units out there were at best putting up meager pockets of guerilla skirmishes against the overwhelming might of this Prophet's fleet, all of them desperate for more time, resources, and just plain hope. But now this Master Chief had flown in and started taking part in the briefings, and by mere presence the elation of those around him became evident. Not necessarily known for being strategic decision-makers, Spartans were nevertheless given autonomy at most times to pursue any course of action they saw fit for the accomplishment of the mission. So revered they were, they could literally tell an officer to _go fuck off _if they had the gumption to.

Coincidentally, the image of Lord Hood himself materialized on every display at once.

It seemed one video feed wasn't enough for the gathering crowd of VIPs inside. They needed each and every monitor forwarding this one channel. An audible sigh could be heard from the periphery if one even cared about the efforts of the unsung heroes, the technicians in the ever darker portions of the base. But, yeah, never mind the critical information on every other screen that the geeks were trying to make sense of for this grand, last-ditch effort to save the fucking world!

There's a lot of greeting and salutation and even some flattery, then some half-hearted discussion about weakening Truth's defensive perimeter. Suddenly the feed is lost as well as all power to the command bunker. Emergency lighting predictably activates when Commander Keyes orders, "Emergency generators, now!"

Seriously? There's no automatic transfer switch? The technicians, yet again, are the thankless saviors? They have to throw some antiquated lever for things to go back to normal? This is the twenty-sixth century, right? Ok, just checking. Please, continue with the chlorophyllâ€|

Oh God, I wish I hadn't said thatâ€|

Seriously? You let the High Prophet of Truth commandeer your encrypted, point-to-point link with the highest ranking officer in the entire military?! A man that many in the UNSC would consider to be God himself?! I almost feel reluctant to ask how! All I know for sure is that your half-assed methods at cyber-security just revealed the Admiral's position! You compromised the commander-in-chief!

Please, tell me this is as bad as it gets. Continueâ€|

Okay, so everyone's just gonna stand and watch the Prophet give a sermon on the colorful screens? Why isn't a technicianâ€"better yetâ€"a _team _of technicians working to triangulate the enemy's position this very second? Ok, it's understandable that geeks can be a bit lazy from time to time. So, failing the executive communications personnel working directly for a commander to be proactive ones, why isn't Commander Keyes herself ordering a team of technicians to triangulate the enemy's position?

Nothing? She's just gonna stand and watch like the rest of the children? This is how a warring Commander deals with their adversary?

Continue!

Well, at least Johnson's still a cigar-chewing bad-ass with perfectly-timed one-liners.

As if pre-ordained, all power is immediately restored following the enemy's childish and unscary tirade of name-calling. But man, does that Prophet really have your ass dialed in, or what? He shut off your power, made you watch that shitty movie with no chairs or popcorn, then went ahead and saved you from restoring the power yourself when it finished!

You are literally fish in a barrel!

Keyes barks at another lowly technician, "Give the order. We're closing shop."

She issues the order like she could (and would) stomp him like a worm beneath her boot if he glances at her questionably.

"Ma'am?" is his only reply. He needs repetition for the Commander's intent to sink in. Remember, a lowly technician according to her. He can only process what he's been trained to process. Outside-the-box thinking is above him.

Again, talking down to subordinates in her typical, charlatan fashion, she asserts, "We're about to get hit!"

Doesn't surprise me, the seasoned gamer, that the Covvies got your twenty pegged down. You already painted Lord Hood with a bull's-eye. So now your orders will be to tuck tail and run, I see. What's the justification, strategic withdrawal? Does that remain the politically-correct term for it in the brave twenty-sixth?

So, let's tally up the growing list of mistakes you laid before us prior toâ€|running away: A field-grade officer making strategic military decisions in front of a flag officer (whom by the way you basically offered up to your enemy). And he's got no objection because his incompetent fleet is all but routed by the first, miniscule invasion from the High Prophet of Regret and figures (just like me) that it couldn't possibly get any worse. You've exhibited incompetence and gross negligence for foundational operations security. And for the love of the UNSC, why can't you return a salute properly?!

How can anyone under your command take you seriously?!

Wait, I'm not satisfied yet. This needs elaboration before we can even begin to pursue strategic objectives that involve the defense of Earth from a hostile, technologically-superior conglomerate of alien races hell-bent on activating giant rings of death scattered about the Milky Way. Not only did you broadcast the location of your senior leadership with a poorly planned communications infrastructure and fail to seize any opportunity to return the favor on the Prophet, but now you are vacating fortified cover to execute a plan that was literally conjured up within a two minute span by two people.

I'm too angry to sigh. We're past the point of subtle hints. I've been grinding my teeth for the last thirty seconds.

Well, at least you've got the Spartan. Despite your shortcomings, there is hope. I don't see how it could get any worse. It could only get better from here, right? Please tell me the lunacy stops right now.

"The wounded," she says, "we're getting them out."

Alright, understandable. UNSC takes care of its own. We never leave a fallen comrade. And the injured can live to fight another day. The tenets of the common soldier prevail even in the darkest hour. We're reversing this downward trend. Things will only get better.

"Ma'am, squad leaders are requesting a rally point. Where should they go?"

Marty O'Donnell's background music has reached a crescendo, it seems, an indication that something dramatic will play out in the next moment. Even the camera angle has reared back as the Commander ascends the steps of the bunker's entry way ready to make her stand. She has a pistol drawn, yet there are no enemies in sight. She racks the weapon's slide back, putting the trigger into single action. Start the prayers now and find cover.

All eyes in the room are drawn in her direction, even the Master Chief's. Remember, she strives for this attention even though people despise her.

At the top of the rise, she turns ever so slightly to the side as she moans over her shoulder: "To war."

The screen fades to black, though this is not the end of the sceneâ€|

"Seriously?"

This stops Commander Keyes in her tracks.

She spins on a heel and looks the interior over for nearly ten whole seconds, betraying the urgency of Earth's situation. She then slowly paces back into the command post's foyer and comes to a halt.

"What did you say, soldier?"

The technician she's talked down to this whole time leaves his post and steps to the middle of the floor, taking his stance by the side of Johnson and the Spartan.

"I mean...to war? _Commander, you can't be serious." He glances sidelong at each of the battle-hardened veterans in his midst, hoping he hasn't spoken too brashly. But they say nothing. And much to his surprise and to his esteem they appear equally perplexed by the Commander's vague intent and instantly look back at her, seemingly prompting her for explanation as well. The technician thusly continues to openly assess her objectives in front of everyone.

